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HIS
MAJESTIES
Concessions

TO THE
BILL of ABOLITION
OF

Arch-Bishops and Bishops, &c.

STATED
and
CONSIDERED.

By *Richard Vines*, one of the Divines that attended the Commissioners of Parliament.

LONDON,

Printed in the year, 1660.

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S I R,

The Law of friendship oblidgeth me to answer your desire, by affording to you my sense touching his Majesty his Concessions towards the removal of Episcopal Government, or the Bil of Abolition.

**His Majesties Concessions to the Bill
of Abolition of Arch-bishops, Bishops,
&c.**

*Stated
&
Considered.*



HIS Majesty hath fully and expressly consented to the Bill of Abolition and removal of the whole Hierarchy contained in the Bill, excepting that part thereof which relates to Bishops; whose Jurisdictional power (as he calls it) he hath also abrogated finally and for ever, except the two Houses shall otherwise determine, and hath reserved to them some power in Ordination only, wherein he would have them to be (as we use to say,) of the *Quorum*, by the use or power of a negative voice in that action, but which doth actually suspend them from

the exercise of all manner of power of Ordination for three years; during which time he hath obliged himself to make no other, no more Bishops, but refers himself to further debate and consultation of Divines, what shall obtain in the Church of *England* after the expiration of that term, according as himself, and the two Houses shall determine upon their advice; which may probably upon his Majesties information more thoroughly in the point, issue to a total abolition of both the name, and all power of Bishops. But if then his Majesty and the Houses shall not agree, the Bishop shall have power of Ordination with the council and consent of the Presbyters, or the major part of them conjoynd or co-operating with him. Which Presbyters are not to be nominated or appointed by his Majesty alone, much less arbitrarily associated by the Bishop himself, but appointed and authorised by his Majesty and the two Houses, and not otherwise.

This being the clear state (as far as I understand) of his Majesty his concession, except I be mistaken in the length of that word *Co-operate*, which is not his Majesties expression. I shall offer to you these two considerations upon it.

C O N S I D E R A T I O N S . I.

First, Whether the Bishops of *England* (and to whom only the bill extends) be not hereby in effect abolished, not only as to their *posse*, but also as to their *esse*; for,

1. There remains no visible way of making any Bishop hereafter, because the Deans and Chapters, who were by the lawes and usage of this Kingdom to elect the Bishop recommended to them by the Kings *Compte de l'erey* are utterly taken away, so as there can be no proceeding to an Ordination of them, and if the book or form of consecration be together with the Book of Common Prayer also abolished, I cannot see but that the Bishops are abolished also, and cannot be made without some new way of constitution which rests in the power of the Parliament.

2. The

2. The Bishops that now are, cannot after three years ordain, except the Houses agree to appoint Presbyters to joyn with them in that action, which if the Houses shall not do, the Bishops power is still under suspension; and if the Presbyterian Government and Ordination were but granted indefinitely, as it is for three years, I do not see but it would rest in the power of the Houses, whether the Bishop should ever ordain or no, and so in effect be vacated, being limited to a concurrence of Presbyters which are not found.

3. His Majesty in this Concession seems to me, (which I speak under his Majesties favour) to have gone quite beside his own level; for in his Papers given to the Divines at *Newport*, He cuts out the Episcopal office by the pattern of the Apostles, and of *Timothy* and *Titus*, whose Episcopal office (as he calls it) did not consist only in a concurrence with a major part of Presbyters in Ordination, or a negative voice to such a major part; nor do the Scriptures by his Majesty alledged, prove them to have bin Bishops in this sense and latitude only, but the primitive Bishops of the second, and haply some of the first century after Christ, were rather of this model, being of the *Quorum* in Ordination; which primitive Bishops, (as the Divines say in their answer) might possibly be, and yet the Bishops of *England* be abolisht: and so it appears, that the Bishops in the Bill presented to his Majesty, are by this Concession of his quite altered and cast in a new mould; which if his Majesty would please to make as a new tendry to his Houses of Parliament, and expressly remove the old, the rub would be in a manner quite taken out of the way, which remains in the opinion of many, because his Majesty doth under the name of the present Bishop capitulate before-hand for a new Episcopacy, which present Bishop, if you shall not concur with me in opinion that he is in effect abolisht by his Majesties Concession, yet certainly he is reduced to so small a hair as cannot be divided any more; for if the King should go but one step further, and take off that negative voice, which this Bishop that is offer'd

is to have in Ordination, he would be then no more then one Presbyter, as he is very little more by this Concession, in the *affirmative part of acting*, though he be more in the *negative part of not acting*, which negative voice of the Bishop would very seldome be used, or if it were, all reason is, that the Expectant or Candidate of the Ministry, should have some relief of his *gravamen*, by appeal to the Provincial meetings, or some other assembly which should have power to determine the case; and then I cannot see but that even this negative voice is rendred in effect nothing, and so the Bishops in effect abolished; and if I was in a capacity to supplicate his Majesty, I should beseech him to consider that there is some difference between *gravamen Spiritus* and *ligamen conscientiae*. For the affection he bears to that Government of Episcopacy, and the long usage of it in the Church, may be *heavy on his Spirit*, and make the Abolition unpleasing, which yet do not bind the conscience, or make the doing it unlawfull to him.

C O N S I D. II.

Secondly., It may be considered if the Bishops be not in effect abolisht in regard of this being,

1. Whether it be any inconvenience, to set up in every County or Province a *Presbytery* for *Ordination*, (the jurisdictional part to go as is already established in Elderships, Classes and Synods) of the gravest and most judicious Ministers, both to give *reputation* to the ordination, and to prevent the mis-administration thereof in the Classes, most of which in *England* may haply not consist of a competent number of men so fit to exercise it; for I am of opinion, that Ordination by Presbyters is good and lawfull, and that one of the *Quorum* concurring with them in Ordination, renders not the same evil or unlawfull; for if it did so, I see not how the *Presbyters* now in being, can well justify their *own*.

2. This way propounded by his Majesty might happily reduce all the Divines of *England* into a liking or acceptance of the Government, and so take off that *odium* or prejudice which it lies under with them and others.

3. The

3. The way of Ordination by Presbyters in every Province or County selected by Parliament *prima vice*, might prevent a great deal of influence which the now sequestred Divines being restored to a capacity of Pastoral charges, will have in the several Classes where they shall be seated.

4. That the Presbyterians ought to take heed that the cause of the continuance of the Warre and all the miseries of it be not laid at their door, and that for opposing a thing in it self lawfull, but not at present to be gotten quite off, by reason of the Kings present unsatisfaction, and his desire of time and means of better information.

5. That such Presbyterians as cannot find a *Jus Divinum* for Ruling Elders acting in Ordination, do judge it as great a disconformity to allow the Ruling Elder a power of co-operation and authority in ordaining Ministers, as to allow one to be of the *Quorum*, who is thereby no more then a *Presbyter*, nor hath the Keyes any more in his hand for that, then a *Moderatour* for the present time may have, for orders sake.

6. That the Covenant binding to extirpare Bishops, if it be understood in *sensu diviso* in that Article, and not (as many conceive) in *sensu composito* only, doth not oblige us to break the peace of all, if every thing be not to be had at first; and if the great and ancient Tree be to be felled down by agreement, shall the parties fight with one another, because the one will fell it down chip by-chipe; the other will tear it up at once by the roots? And therefore I humbly pray the honourable Members of Parliament, the warned Presbyterians, and (as they are called) Independents, to consider of this *Punctillio*, as it is laid in the ballance against the loss of all his Majesty his other Concessions, and the fruits and consequences of new distractions and sadder times; for (I speak only in case that the King can be got no further) it ought to be well weighed, whether this negative vote in Ordination, be such a thing as may justly imbitter all our peace besides. And if any should say that out of this old root the old Episcopacy will grow again; I do not conceive that it is possible, being

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ing hoop'd about by the iron hoop of Laws; for the Primitive Episcopacy grew so fast, because the *Pagan* Princes looked not after that Government, which was but exercised over such Voluntaries as put their necks under it; and Christian Princes thought they should allow it as much as it had under Heathens. But as for the resurrection of it after it's dead, it cannot be, but by Parliament, and against an Act of Parliament, there is no fortification to be made; In fine, if I cannot prevail with you to accept less, then you ask, I humbly beseech the King to grant more, then he yet offers; for the common peace sake, which is to be purchased at any rate next the price of truth; and even some truths are to be abated, or forborn to be exercised for the present, for the common and publick peace.

Vale

Novemb. 8.

FINIS.

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